

# Product recalls keep food supply safe

Story by  
**LYNDA VALENTINE**  
DeCA

The Defense Commissary Agency understands customers’ concerns regarding food safety and is committed to providing a safe and secure shopping environment for its patrons.

When it comes to food safety, DeCA engages its stringent, multitiered system to ensure quick and complete removal of suspect items from store shelves throughout the world whenever a food or product recall is issued.

The recall process begins when an item is suspected of being contaminated or otherwise unfit for consumption or use, according to Army Col. Perry Chumley, DeCA’s director of Public Health, Safety and Security.

Chumley said no matter the source, when DeCA receives a recall alert, the first order of business is to determine whether or not the product line or manufacturer is part of the DeCA inventory. That job falls to the DeCA’s sales directorate, which purchases and tracks the thousands of products bought for resale in the commissary system.

If any commissary stocks the same



brand name as the item in the recall, the sales directorate staff determines if the product DeCA sells matches the actual product being recalled. This is the part of the advisory or recall process that confuses most customers.

When a lot number matches the item being recalled, the matching lot numbers are immediately removed from the shelves and placed on hold. Some companies, however, will ask DeCA to remove its entire stock of a product even if only one lot number in their company’s line is recalled. Other times, companies will request that just the item indicated in the recall be removed, leaving other products with the same name on the shelves for cus-

tomers. This is why an entire product line may be removed following a recall, but why other times similar products remain on the shelves for commissary patrons.

Items listed on a recall go into the medical holding areas of commissaries, where signs are placed on the items stating they are on medical hold. Each commissary has an employee responsible for ensuring every item remains off the shelf until either cleared for sale or removed from the facility. That employee counts the items when they are put into the holding area, and ensures that the initial count remains the same until the items are released for sale or removed from the facility.

To ensure there are no mix-ups along the way, “numerous redundancies are built into the system, both internal and external to DeCA,” Chumley said. “In addition, anytime a recall comes out through the media and before they get the word from us, local commissary managers have the authority to pull items off their shelves if they feel the items might not be safe.”

For information about recalls and other items of interest at the Aberdeen Proving Ground Commissary, log onto <http://www.commissaries.com/stores/html/store.cfm?dodaac=HQCNEJ>.

## McNamara

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challenges the new position brings.

“I’d like to help ensure we’re poised for this growth we are getting ready to undertake, servicing those who are here to serve and doing those things efficiently and effectively,” he said. “I’m attempting to instill greater strategic approaches to issues so we’re not just focused on the day-to-day issues but integrating the vast amount of missions and making sure our customer base is poised for success.”

McNamara said his short term goals include helping to provide a smooth transition for the new commanders, “giving them confidence in our workforce to let them know we have an excellent workforce to meet the upcoming challenges,” McNamara said.

He discussed how working as the deputy to the garrison commander is different from serving as director of DSHE.

“The nature of DSHE forces you to be attuned to the risks and hazards associated with many missions that go on here... whether you’re talking about people’s personal safety or being prepared to respond to emergencies or managing environmental matters associated with those actions,” he said. “The job here has a much broader perspective and varying customer base with the people I interact with.”

He started working for the Environmental Management Office at APG in April 1983 almost right after graduating from college.

McNamara said he became

interested in the Army after writing a research paper on the Army’s environmental program.

He knew Ken Stachiw, who was the chief of the EMO at the time and later became McNamara’s boss and mentor.

“I was fortunate that when a position came open and I applied, I was selected,” he said. “So began my federal career.”

During the 80s, APG and the Army’s environmental program grew because of watershed events that happened at APG, McNamara said.

“I was along for that ride.” “As things grew, I did what I was asked to do and was willing to accept greater responsibility so I started to progress in my career with different assignments.”

McNamara became chief of the Environmental Compliance Division in 1994.

Three years later, he was notified he had to serve as the acting director of DSHE for two weeks because Joseph Craten was temporarily serving as the deputy to the garrison commander. Then, Craten took on the position permanently which made McNamara the permanent director of DSHE.

Although he works long hours to support Garrison activities, McNamara said he still makes time for his Family which includes his wife, Grace, and daughters, 18-year-old Brianna and 16-year-old Allyson.

He said that his job doesn’t have as much of a negative effect on the Family since his children are grown and his wife works long hours as well.

“The girls are used to knowing dad’s at work,” he said. “We understand and respect one another’s responsibilities.”

He serves on the parish

council and several committees for St. Stephen’s Catholic Church, and he also enjoys golf and playing basketball.

McNamara said he is grateful for the opportunity to be given the responsibility in his new position and thanked those who have helped him along the way.

“I’m blessed and honored to be serving in the capacity of deputy to the garrison commander, and I’m also smart enough to know I didn’t get here solely on my own accord,” he said. “I’ve been extremely fortunate to work with extremely motivated and capable people who did their jobs well and were problem solvers. My success is built upon their hard work and I’m very grateful for that.

“I also know the garrison leadership team with its directors and office chiefs are equally dedicated people and have built great teams to make us successful so I’m very much looking forward to serving with them and moving the garrison forward,” he said.

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